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New courthouse complex taking shape to bolster Baghdad's 'rule of law'

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This is an artist's rendering of the new Rusafa Courthouse complex that will be a 5000-square-meter two-story facility when completed.

Baghdad, Iraq – A new regional courthouse is taking shape to help Baghdad enforce the rule of law.

Construction on Rusafa Courthouse got under way in November and is currently 25 percent complete. About 120 Iraqis are on the crew helping build the facility that is scheduled to open in December. The 5000-square-meter two-story structure will serve Rusafa District and neighboring areas east of the Tigris River benefiting over one million residents. A Witness Protection Facility is also part of the complex that will house up to 200 people testifying

for the prosecution.

"We're building the Rusafa Regional Courthouse for the Ministry of Interior," said Navy Lt. Robert Leines who is assigned to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). "It's a key institution in Iraq's quest for law and order." Once open, 350 Iraqis are expected to work there including judges, lawyers, investigators, administrative assistants, and security personnel.

Leines said that the majority of his staff of 50 people are Iraqi engineers. "Our

Iraqi Quality Assurance representatives visit that courthouse site every day, taking photos, ensuring we're getting quality construction in a safe manner." He praised the courage those individuals display reporting to work and getting the job done. "They believe in what we're doing and want to make Iraq a better place."

He and his staff are overseeing 100 active projects valued at \$400 million including new water and sewer lines, school renovations, primary healthcare centers, upgrading gas stations, and installing new electric distribution networks in east Baghdad. He noted they work in partnership with the Baghdad public works directorate, or Amanat, and Iraqi Ministries on these projects.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is overseeing the construction of five such courthouses throughout Iraq. The Karkh Courthouse is nearing completion in western Baghdad and the others are in Mosul, Basrah, and Erbil.

"These facilities are critical to enforcement of the rule of law," explained Navy



About 120 Iraqis are helping build the 5000-sq.-meter two-story Rusafa Courthouse in Baghdad. Shown is Lt. Col. J.P. Moszer (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Deputy Officer in Charge Baghdad Area Office) who worked nearly a decade as a brick mason and concrete/structural steel talking to an Iraqi with over 30 years experience. (U.S. Army photo)



Navy Lt. Robert Leines, Officer in Charge of Gulf Region Division Central District's Loyalty Office in east Baghdad, visits the Rusafa Courthouse construction site. (U.S. Army photo)

Cdr. Joseph Mauser, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Security and Justice sector lead in Iraq. As an interim measure, a temporary courthouse has opened at Rusafa. "As the case load continues to grow, having a permanent facility with sufficient capacity becomes increasingly important," he added.

Apart from the courthouse complex itself, Rusafa also features a facility where up to 5,400 accused individuals will be housed awaiting their arraignment or trial dates. The entire area is surrounded by concrete barriers similar to the International Zone located on the other side of the Tigris River, and they have identified themselves as a second Green Zone -- this one the "Rule of Law Green Zone."



A crew of about 120 Iraqis are helping build the new Rusafa Courthouse complex east of the Tigris River. (U.S. Army photo)

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